



## News Release

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### **BLACK HILLS ENERGY ADVISES CUSTOMERS TO CLEAR A PATH TO AND KEEP SNOW AWAY FROM NATURAL GAS METERS AND SERVICE VALVES**

DUBUQUE, Iowa, Dec. 23, 2009 – Black Hills Energy reminds customers to keep their outdoor natural gas meters visible at all times, and to clear a path so their gas meter set is easily accessible. Snow and ice should be kept away from the shut-off valve located underneath the meter so it's easy to locate.

“When the meter is visible, it helps Black Hills Energy technicians and police and fire personnel to access the meter in case of an emergency at a customer's residence,” said Mark Ernst, Black Hills Energy operations manager for Eastern Iowa. “In addition, easily accessible meters help to ensure our technicians are able to read the customer's meter each month. With more ice and snow in the forecast for Iowa, it's important customers remember not to tamper with or bury their meter, and to keep the meter's shut-off valve visible at all times,” Ernst continued.

Some general ice coating may be normal with the weather. However, accumulation of ice on natural gas meters, regulators and associated piping can be hazardous. If melting snow and ice run off are creating an ice buildup on your gas meter set, contact the company's 24-hour customer service center at 888-890-5554. Black Hills Energy will send a professional technician to inspect the natural gas meter free of charge.

“For those that have buried meters, it's generally as simple as clearing away any snow before it freezes,” said Ernst. “Regardless of the season, we always encourage customers to keep their natural gas meter and service valve visible and accessible at all times.”

Black Hills Energy serves 149,500 natural gas customers in 130 Iowa communities, and is a proud recipient of the U.S. EPA 2009 Energy Star® Leadership in Housing Award. Black Hills Energy is part of Black Hills Corp. (NYSE: BKH) — a diversified energy company with a tradition of exemplary service and a vision to be the energy partner of choice — is based in Rapid City, S.D., with corporate offices in Denver, Colo., and Omaha, Neb. The company serves 759,000 natural gas and electric utility customers in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. The company's non-regulated businesses generate wholesale electricity, produce natural gas, oil and coal, and market energy. Black Hills employees partner to produce results that improve life with energy. More information is available at [www.blackhillscorp.com](http://www.blackhillscorp.com).

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